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ABSTRACT

People working in the area of early childhood, either as practitioners or as advocates, are often faced with the task of trying to make sense of federal and state policies. Adopting the approach that an historical perspective is necessary in order to understand the social context in which change or attempted change occurs, this paper presents a history of Australian events to illustrate variations in policies for young children and to sort out some of the factors that lie behind these variations. It is proposed that two factors contribute to such variations: one such factor has been termed "ideologies," describing the values people adopt, the categories within which they think, and the kinds of evidence or argument they find convincing. The second factor has been termed "the resources of interested parties," referring to the facilities available to the people seeking change or to the people who need to be persuaded. Four specific historical events which occurred in Australia during the 1970s illustrate these two factors; further conditions affecting the making and unmaking of policy are discussed. (MP)

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FACTORS AFFECTING POLICIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:

AN AUSTRALIAN CASE

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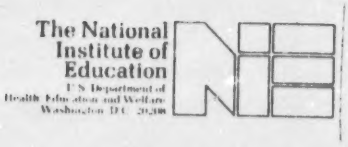

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People working in the area of early childhood, either as practitioners or as advocates, are often faced with the task of trying to make sense of federal and state policies. The involvement may come from the wish to understand events or from the hope of designing a change in policy and having it implemented. For either goal--understanding or introducing change--Takanishi (1977) has argued for an historical perspective, especially one in which we attempt both to describe and to analyze the social context in which change or an attempt at change occurs. How to "analyze the social context," however, is by no means obvious. A major purpose of the present paper is to suggest some ways of doing so.

Takanishi's (1977) argument for a more analytic social history is part of her account of shifts in federal involvement in early education over the period 1933 to 1973, within the USA. The history offered here covers a briefer period (1970 to 1980) and a different country--Australia. During this time in Australia, federal policies veered from a restricted provision of preschool and day care to a plan for universal preschool and expanded day care, and then returned to a position close to the original state. Similar changes in federal policies have been noted by Takanishi (1977) for the United States and by Tizard (1976) for England. We wish to use the Australian events as a way of asking a question that could apply in any country. What factors are involved in policy variations?

Broadly speaking, there are two routes towards answering that question. One is to look at policy variations across countries. Chazan (1978), for instance, provides a set of descriptions of early childhood policies in a number of countries, countries in which provisions for preschool and/or day care range from being almost completely absent to being close to universal. The second route is to look at policy variations within

a country. These historical accounts may be long-term and cover a range of services for children: Aries (1962), Kessen (1979), Rosenkrantz (1978), White and his colleagues (White, Day, Freeman, Hartman, & Messenger, 1973) provide examples. Or they may concentrate on a shorter time span, on recent events, and on early childhood programs, as Takanishi (1977) has done and as we propose doing. This second route provides a sharper focus. It also has the particular advantage of allowing us to work from several sources: written documents, verbal reports, and our own memory of events (at least as we saw them).

Selecting a route or general method, however, is only part of the story. Takanishi (1977) has argued strongly for a social history that is not purely descriptive, and with this we would agree. In particular, we wish to start by taking up three of her arguments: (1) that the account must describe the social context (p. 160), (2) that it must consider "social, political, and economic conditions" (p. 155), and (3) that there "must be room for the impact of different ideologies, strongly held assumptions about childhood, the family, and the role government should play in the lives of young children (p. 160).

Ideologies and Their Impact

Ideologies and their impact in fact provide the first major factor we wish to point to. We use the term "ideologies" to cover the ideas people hold both about the way things are and the way they ought to be: in more formal terms, both the "cognitive" and "normative" aspects of knowledge or of consciousness (cf. Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974). These ideas appear in our history as having several forms of impact. They provide a basis for concern, in the sense that when expectations are met, people have a sense that everything is in order. When they are not

met, the result is a sense of alarm and a conviction that a "problem" exists where it did not before. More subtly, ideologies provide the categories or divisions in terms of which people think: distinctions, for example, between "care" and "education," "mothers" and "working mothers," "private" and "public" areas of responsibility. Of particular importance is the concept of "need," either in terms of a total group (e.g., all children) or in terms of a subgroup who have "special needs." Ideologies provide, as well the terms of an appeal, an argument or an attempt to persuade. Finally, they provide the basis for friction, for a failure not only to cooperate effectively but even to understand what another party is attempting to do.

Interested Parties and Their Resources

The second major factor we wish to point to consists of interested parties and their resources. A cast of characters is a standard part of any history. Attention to resources is less standard. We have taken the concept of resources primarily from sociological studies of interactions within the family, studies that ask who holds what resources, and what the expected pattern is for an equitable exchange of resources: my physical, financial, or moral support, for instance, in exchange for your deference, fidelity, affection, or commitment to bringing up the children (cf. Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1976). We have found the concept helpful in analyzing the impact of changes in family patterns (Burns & Goodnow, 1978; Goodnow & Burns, 1980). We find it again useful in this look at shifts in federal policy. No account of federal policy, for instance, can ignore the resource of money. We have found it equally necessary to consider a less obvious resource, namely the presence of procedures,

channels, or "machineries" that can be brought into action whenever an issue or a possibility arises.

With these two general factors sketched out, let us turn to the specific events and see how they both illustrate the general factors and point to further conditions affecting the making and unmaking of policy.

EVENT 1: 1970

During an election year, the then Prime Minister (Gorton, of the Liberal-Country Party, the more conservative of Australia's two main political parties) announced that the government intended to establish a network of "preschool-cum-childminding centers."

This announcement was a major shift in policy. Despite pressure from a variety of groups during the 1920s, the federal government had stuck to its policy of defining education as a state rather than federal responsibility, except at the tertiary or postsecondary level. (In Australia, all universities are federally funded). At this tertiary level, the government had been moving towards more direct involvement in the training of "teachers" and "caregivers" for children below the age of 5, stepping a little beyond its existing commitment to teacher training for primary and secondary schools. This funding, however, was for teacher training and not directly for children's services. Up to 1970, direct support for children's services had been largely limited to the period during World War II, when many young mothers moved to "war work." The Federal Ministry of Health then set up a system of subsidized creches. Subsidy lapsed after the end of the war, as it did in the USA (Takanishi, 1977).

Why should the new federal policy be so surprising? And how did it come about? For these questions, we need to consider the social context and the impact of some particular lines of evidence and argument.

The Social Context

The Australian scene was and is marked by a set of distinctions and values that structure all discussion and thought about services for young children.

Forms of service. A sharp distinction is drawn between "preschool" (or "kindergarten") and "day care." "Preschools" offer short sessions (usually 2½ hours) to children age 3 years or more. "Day care centers" are open for up to 12 hours a day, and some accept children younger than a year. Buildings for either type of service are typically separate from each other and from schools. The state of Queensland, as Ashby (1981) has noted in an earlier volume of this series, is an exception. There the two types of service have been covered for some time by the one association (Kindergarten and Creche Association); in recent years, the shift has been to attach most preschools to primary schools under the control of the Queensland Department of Education.

This distinction between preschool and day care echoes Takanishi's (1977) description of the situation in the United States: "Historically, within American society . . . the nursery school was to provide an educational program for children of the middle and upper classes; the day care centers, run by social welfare agencies, were to provide all day 'custodial' care for children who fitted within identified categories of 'problems'" (p. 141). As Takanishi points out, no hard and fast distinction exists in reality between preschool and day care. It is a distinction, however, that is still deeply imbedded in Australian arguments about services for young children. A conceptual distinction might have little impact or be easy to undo if it were not supported by other factors. In the Australian case, this distinction has been supported by several factors: differences in the

history, clientele, forms of training, and professional associations of the two types of service. Historically, day care centers in Australia have always been oriented towards women who carried money outside the home. The assumption--and until recent times the reality--was that the major reason for women taking such work was economic necessity.

In contrast, kindergartens had a more checkered history. Originally, they had been established for the benefit of the poor, with an eye to improving the quality of motherhood and the quality of care within the home. The kindergarten was to serve as a model, assisted by middle-class kindergarten teachers, who would make "home visits." After World War II, however, middle-class parents in middle-class areas began to set up kindergartens for their own children. The change has been related to the diminished number of other adults in the house (both paid domestic help and extended family), the relative isolation of young mothers in new suburbs, and a change in mothers' expectations, expectations both about their own development and their responsibility to provide preschool experience for their children's optimal development (Burns, 1978; Spearritt, 1974). These kindergartens were still, however, perceived as an addition to family care, with the latter covering the major part of the day.

Along with the difference in clientele went a difference in staff training. Separate training colleges were established in most states. The state of New South Wales (Australia's most populous state), for instance, has the Kindergarten Teachers College and the Nursery Teachers College. (Only in 1982 have the two been merged--by federal fiat--into a single Institute of Early Childhood, with a single director.) Not surprisingly, people also belonged to different professional associations. It was not until the late 1970s, in fact, that a single Association for Early Childhood was established, combining members of the two main groups.

Do such distinctions matter? Two immediate effects may be noted at this point. At the professional level, the distinction between "care" and "education" led to a lack of communication and trust between the two groups, making them a less effective lobby than they might have been. At the funding level, the lack of overlap escalated the cost of developing services for children. What was being asked for was the separate development of services, buildings, and training colleges. Any effort at expansion would have to come to terms with the double drain. This was not a major problem as long as the double line was privately financed (from fees, philanthropic sources, and drives to raise funds from the general public). Once resources were sought from a single federal purse, however, cost became a factor and "duplication" a source of concern. The distinction between preschool and day care had to be faced and, as we shall see, blurred if at all possible.

Values and labels. Allied to the two forms of service is a set of values and labels. Preschool supervisors usually describe their role as "educational," applying the term "custodial" to other forms of care (day care, after-school care, or emergency care). Few people can be as indignant as the preschool teacher who sees her service being treated as "custodial" by mothers seeking to be "free" of their children. (Mothers who arrive dressed for tennis or golf are spoken of with special scorn.)

The critical underlying values, however, are those related to the expected role of the family, especially of the mother, and linked to the concept of young children as being especially vulnerable and of early experience as critical and probably irreversible. The pervasive belief was that men had paid work, while women kept houses and raised children, exclusively and single-handedly. In the words of two middle-class women

interviewed by Burns in 1978: "I deplore the idea of women seeking baby minding help when it is not absolutely necessary"; "I wouldn't think of going to work while my children are young, no matter what I needed."

Such values were in themselves part of a wider social context. They reflect a time period (from 1946 to 1970) that one family historian in the United States (Gliok, 1975) has called the most familistic on record. Within Australia, marriage became all but universal, and the number of marriages which remained childless shrank to about 10% (Borrie, 1975). John Bowlby's writings on "maternal deprivation" were widely read and used to substantiate the view that even brief separations from the mother (as opposed to the traumatic separations of hospitalization or the "stimulus deprivation" of sterile institutional care) caused irreparable harm. The critical period of early childhood development soon came to extend beyond the infant and toddler stage. One reputable film from the United States, popular in early childhood circles, had the daunting title If at First You Don't Succeed, You Don't Succeed. In this era, the concepts of "later is easier" and of "second chances" were definitely not in vogue.

Once again, an aspect of ideology might be easy to undo if it were not supported by other factors. In the present case, the stress on mothers being at home also fitted well with economic traditions. Government, business, and trade unions in Australia have all long shared the conviction that the unpaid work of women makes possible the paid work of men (Ryan & Rowse, 1975). Since 1907, that conviction has been embodied in the legal judgment that a man's wage should be calculated as a "family wage," covering the support of a dependent wife and children.

Do such values matter? Again, as Takanishi (1977) argues, we need not only to describe the prevailing ideas about children and families but

also to ask about their impact. One immediate impact is on the kinds of argument one can present for an expansion of services. Advocates of preschools, for instance, have an advantage in a context where most people think of preschools as benefitting all children. The appeal can be framed in terms of "children in general," with the underlying implication that the children who benefit are the children of the worthy middle-class, the group that both makes and responds to the appeal. Advocates of expanded day care are often in a more difficult position. They may operate in a context where day care is regarded as possibly damaging and where the interested mothers may be defined as indifferent to the best interests of even their own children. The clientele of day care advocates can be denied support on the grounds that they are "undeserving," a classic maneuver in the denial or contraction of support (Goodnow, 1981). The people to be helped are "problem" families or "women who don't want to be women." As we shall see, the day care group needed to find a way out of the "small" and "undeserving" categories, as well as a way of arguing that they were not a deviant minority and that their cause was just.

Responsibilities of the "private" and "public" sectors. At any time, children may be regarded as part of an "eternal triangle" with "the family" and "the state" as the other two points (Goodnow & Burns, 1980). What shifts from one time to another is the division of labor and responsibility among the three parties, together with "access routes." There are times, for example, when the responsibility for children is regarded as almost exclusively the family's. The state steps in only in cases where the parent can be defined as clearly incompetent or markedly abusive. Assistance from the state to children is "funnelled" through the family (child

endowment, paid directly to the mother, is an example). At other times, the state plays a more active role, may intervene more readily, and may allow children or minors direct access to services (e.g., to legal representation or to advice and assistance on contraception), without the parents' knowledge or even against the parents' wishes. The variations appear to reflect shifts in the state's perceived needs (e.g., for a population or a work force of a certain size), the state's resources, and the extent to which picking up or getting rid of an obligation is perceived as an acceptable part of a political platform.

In the United States (Takanishi, 1977) and in the United Kingdom (Tizard, 1976), federal or state acceptance of responsibility for children of preprimary school age has consistently been reluctant, sporadic, confined to setting up "model" or "demonstration" programs that others are encouraged to continue, responsive largely to crises, and accompanied by a great deal of cautionary rhetoric. Australia fits the same tradition. Until the 1960s, almost all services for children under school age were privately financed. Support came partly from fees, but also from charity drives--and the donations of both money and labor. The training colleges were also privately financed. Students paid fees and helped raise funds. In effect, the services were part of a philanthropic and self-help tradition.

The first clear break came during the period from 1968 to 1971, when the federal government began to provide grants to cover a major part of the building costs for training colleges in the early childhood area. This appeared to pave the way, but was still very distant from the announcement in 1970 of a plan to fund services directly through the establishment of "preschool and childminding centers."

We have sketched out so far three major features of the social context prior to 1970: (1) a distinction between "care" and "education"; (2) a set of values and labels, especially those related to the definition of early experience as critical and to the mother's role in the home; and (3) a distinction between "private" and "public" responsibility, with a federal government reluctant to extend its responsibility beyond the established school system. Given such distinctions and traditions, how did change come about? Several forms of evidence and argument appear to have set the stage, again pivoting around the major factors of ideology, and interested parties and their resources.

Arguments for Change

Limited resources of the private sector. Whether the form of service was preschool or day care, increasing professionalization was bringing a shift in resources and in costs. The drive for professional credentials is worth noting in itself. In any field of work, professionalization means higher wages, and credentials tend to increase rather than decrease. In the area of early childhood services, Joffe (1977) argues that a further factor is important. People wish to regard themselves as "experts" or as "teachers." To use an Australian term, they prefer to describe themselves as "trained," in contrast to the "untrained" majority. Establishing such status, however, is especially difficult for people who "teach" or "care for" young children. Their jobs are often seen by the general public as being no different from what any well-intentioned mother with a little experience could do. The link to motherhood may even be made explicit in the arguments for training, as in the 1911 prospectus from the Sydney Kindergarten Teachers' College, which described teacher training as a way "to keep alive and develop more of the potential of motherhood" (p. 2).

Where the "potential of motherhood" ends and the status of "trained teacher" or "expert caregiver" begins may be a boundary that, by its fuzziness, prompts people to search with special vigor for documentable ways of distinguishing between "us" and "them."

In the push for a clearer professional status, personnel argued for longer training, higher wages, and less reliance on "untrained" volunteer help. The cost of care spiralled, both for the volunteers raising funds and for the families using services. The overall result was a need to turn more and more to other sources of funding. This was, in fact, the precise course taken in the late 1960s by the Children's Action Group (a group with a preschool base) who lobbied first the reluctant state government of New South Wales and then the federal government for financial support (Spearritt, 1974). For both governments, reasons that they should provide support other than those based on financial difficulty were clearly needed. These reasons came in the form of there being a need that should be met, and of that need affecting large numbers of children.

An insufficient number of preschools. In any "modern" society, an appeal to numbers is often a legitimizing argument (Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974). The early childhood area is no exception. Some significant numbers in the present case came from a 1970 survey by the Australian Council for Educational Research on the proportions of eligible children attending preschools. The figures varied from state to state but were typically low: 52% in the Australian Capital Territory (an area similar in size to Washington, DC, with funds from federal sources); 29% in Victoria; 17% in South Australia; 13% in Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania; and 3% in the largest state--New South Wales.

The assumptions behind this survey and its use are of interest. The argument starts from the assumption that preschools are valuable either as a form of education in their own right or as a preparation for later formal schooling. Children need preschool education. To the extent that it is not provided, a loss of benefit exists. To the extent that it is provided to some children but not others, the loss of benefit is unequal. All such argument would be irrelevant, however, if the prevailing ideology did not contain the concept that children's needs should be met and that the level of inequality within the population should not become "excessive." As Takanishi (1977) notes, there is an in-built tension in societies that believe in both economic and political liberalism; people should be free to accumulate individual wealth and status, but the resulting gaps violate a sense of "fairness" and can provide a spark for reform.

Limited resources of the family. Even if preschool education were not regarded as an asset, unequally available, evidence was accumulating that other aspects of children's needs were not being met in the expected way. The true family picture was departing from the image of father at work, mother at home.

Again, some of the prominent evidence consisted of numbers, especially numbers showing that many "working mothers" had preschool children. The evidence came from surveys in the late 1950s undertaken by the Women's Bureau within the Department of Labour and National Service, and from a Child Care Survey carried out in 1969 by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. These results shattered the illusion that few women, especially women with preschool children, were working outside the home. The 1969 survey was conducted as a result of pressure from the Australian Pre-School Association. Its results showed that some

270,000 preschool children had "working" mothers, and, of these, only about 6% were estimated to be in preschool centers. The majority were cared for by private minders, friends, or relatives.

Unsatisfactory care outside the home. Burns and her colleagues (Burns, Fegan, Sparkes, & Thompson, 1975) found a majority of women working in the electrical trades dissatisfied with the arrangements they had to make for their children and in favor of a subsidized, "official" system. In addition, cases were reported of children being left unattended at home or in the care of a person least able to earn. Some of these cases were officially noted (e.g., a 1970 report by the Mental Health Association of New South Wales, recommending preschool centers attached to factories). Some appeared in newspaper reports of household accidents. Many were noted in conversation among people involved in the early childhood field. To one of the present authors (Goodnow), these latter cases seemed to be almost invariably stories about "Mediterranean" families (of Turkish, Greek, or Italian background), and the goal of assimilating these people into the mainstream of Australian society provided another rationale for departing from the usual pattern of upholding care at home by mothers. (There could, for instance, have been an attempt at large-scale family support, or parent education, or campaigns persuading mothers not to work.) At the least, these case studies were an uncomfortable challenge to the Australian conscience, a conscience based on the conviction that young children deserve at least a "reasonable start in life," that Australia is "a lucky country," and that Australians are by and large "fair." Since the case studies could be easily presented by the media and understood by all, a climate of some "need" or "necessity" to act could be facilitated.

A Change in the Interested Parties

So far, we have been dealing with arguments for change, many of them presented by people associated with half-day preschools. (The Pre-School Association has a long tradition of support from upper middle-class women interested in philanthropy, including one woman whose family played a major role in Australian media--newspapers, radio, and television. As in other countries, children before school age are often the concern of "first ladies" but seldom of presidents.)

In fact, however, the set of interested parties was becoming more diverse. One expansion was related to the labor market. Brennan (1982), for instance, notes a 1971 study carried out jointly by the Australian Clothing Manufacturers and the Department of Labour and National Service. Its conclusion was that increasing numbers of women would be needed for the expanding economy, and it recommended, as one inducement toward their return to work, the establishment of subsidized child care centers. As both Tizard (1976) and Takanishi (1977) note, the expected need for women in the labor force seems able to cause suspensions of belief in the necessity for young children to be cared for exclusively by mothers at home. Rosenkrantz (1978) makes a similar point with regard to ideas about the capacity of children--if employed at labor--to endure the usual conditions of paid work. The spreading concept of physical and psychological unsuitability, she comments, coincided with a decreased need for children in the work force.

The second change in the interested parties concerned the number of women interested in paid work outside the home. Three groups of women were beginning to emerge, to whom the image of "men at work, women and young children at home" was out of keeping with reality and

often uncomfortable. One was a small group of well-educated women who wished to work. This group was to become larger, although even in 1974 Burns' survey of a middle-class group showed many women with strong professional qualifications (such as lawyers, doctors, dentists) regarding childrearing as a full-time role. The second group was larger: it consisted of new immigrant families who often combined the features of little ready money, a strong interest in upward mobility, little initial skill in English, unrecognized credentials, little knowledge of or ability to use what few community resources existed, and a background where a dependent, non-earning wife was not the norm. Within this group, both spouses often sought paid work, by necessity and/or choice. The third group--cutting across all others--consisted of a rising number of one-parent families, made up almost completely of women raising children without the presence or the adequate financial support of a male partner. For this group, the dominant ideology of "women at home" could not be observed and often rang hollow.

Overall, we have at this point factors for change on two sides. We have a federal government influenced by reports of a need for women in the labor force and by arguments that a gap exists between an image of reasonable concern for children and the existing services. We also have a set of interested parties pointing to specific ways in which the gap might begin to be closed. Action proceeded relatively slowly, however. In fact, it did not keep pace with further change in the interested parties, those parties' resources, or the type of argument presented for particular forms of assistance to young children and their families.

EVENT 2: 1972

In 1972, the Liberal-Country Party government passed the Child Care Act, which enabled the federal government to make capital grants (for building) and recurrent grants (for running costs) to nonprofit organizations providing child care. Funding was far from sufficient to allow unlimited support, however, a factor that brings up a recurring question in the provision of any selective service: How shall funding "priority" be established?

This question is both a thorn in the side of any funding agency and a boon in any analysis of the rationale or the ideology underlying policies. It has been answered at times in terms of the labor market, as in Tizard's (1976) report of special provisions in England in the 1960s for the children of nurses and teachers who were returning to work. In the Australian case, priority was established largely on a self-help basis: the government would fund in response to submissions by local groups rather than by designating priority areas, or, at this stage, by giving any blanket priority to individuals with "special needs."

The Child Care Act was not passed without frequent reference in the course of parliamentary debate to the incipient dangers. As one senator who was later to become Minister for Social Welfare remarked, it was to be hoped that a sense of "parental responsibility" would dissuade parents of a child younger than 3 or 4 years of age from using the centers unless the child had a single parent, or a parent who was sick or incapacitated (cited by Brennan, 1982).

By now, however, the audience had begun to shift. The Women's Electoral Lobby was formed in 1972, aimed at uniting women from a variety of backgrounds. In addition, women's liberation groups were gathering

strength. Both groups argued for a shift in the target of concern, namely a shift to concern for the quality of life for women. Both types of group offered a challenge to the dominant ideology on two counts, namely that women should be exclusively at home (and were happiest there) and that day care was necessarily harmful to children. (As in the USA, research was felt to be needed to establish that the quality of care--at home or in a center--was the critical component.) Both types of group also sought an alternative ideology. Often heard, for instance, was an argument by Margaret Mead: "We now expect the family to achieve alone what no other society has expected of such a small unit: in fact, we call on one or two adults to achieve alone what the whole clan used to do" (cited by McCaughey & Sebastian, 1977, p. 5). Since it was obviously neither "fair" nor "reasonable"--nor even possible--for small families to take up all this slack, "the state" should provide. In effect, all mothers and parents were now presented as "needy" or "deserving" by virtue of the nature of contemporary society.

Tizard (1976) reports a similar shift within England from arguments that were originally entirely child-centered to arguments that also took clear note of the needs of adults. His own position certainly illustrates both types of argument, with a stress on the latter. He points out that "some programmes, and some nursery milieux, have been shown to have a remarkably powerful effect upon children's competencies" (Tizard, 1976, p. 153). At the same time, he gives the greater weight, in arguing for an expansion of services, to parents' interests and needs. The parents he stresses especially are the mothers of young children:

> A number of epidemiological studies indicate very clearly that, as compared with other women, and with women of older children, the majority of mothers of young children can in a real sense be regarded as disadvantaged. They are

> more likely to be poorer and worse housed and to have fewer services available to them. . . . Very many . . . suffer from severe psychological strain. (Tizard, 1976, p. 151)

Such widespread need provides, then, the basis for Tizard's advocacy of widely available services, as against selective services for cases of special need.

Arguments about the inevitable or "no-fault" needs of women with young children are an attempt to change the terms in which people think, especially to detach negative labels from women interested in their children receiving care and education outside the home. What the new lobbying groups needed, however, was a "machinery"--a way to have such views embodied in policy and action. They found it in the two-party system during an election year. The Australian Labour Party (ALP) was out of power but gaining support. It was seeking ways to attract the votes of women, since Australian women--like those in other countries--had typically been less inclined to vote Labour than men had been. Groups such as the Women's Electoral Lobby were designed to cut across political affiliations, but their interest in social change suggested a potential wing vote towards Labour, a party with a platform of social reform. Finally, the ALP was seeking ways to put into concrete form its general policy of social reform. And the man nominated to be the ALP Minister for Education if the election were won (Beazley) was well aware of the reports from Head Start and of Head Start's intended use as a means of bringing about social change. Beazley was also the member of Parliament who proposed an amendment to the Liberal Party's Child Care Act urging the government to "establish Child Care Centers to meet the needs of working mothers" (cited by Brennan, 1982). In effect, he offered both rationales for expansion: advantages both for children and for women. The way was clear for at least a change of plan in policy.

EVENT 3: A NEW PARTY PLATFORM

During the election year of 1972, Labour's promise was (1) to make a year of preschool education available to every Australian child, and (2) to establish centers for child "care." The policy was double-headed ("education" and "care"). So also was the rationale, legitimizing the initiative.

The first part of the rationale concerned advantages for children. The general theme of the ALP was a commitment to greater social equality. Equality of education was part of that theme (as both a means and an end). Preschool was "the area of greatest inequality of education" (speech by the Prime Minister-to-be E. G. Whitlam, Blacktown Civic Centre, 13 November 1972). It was also the route to equality: "the most important single weapon in promoting equality and in overcoming social, economic and language inequalities" (Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, cited by Brennan, 1982, p. 13).

The second part of the rationale concerned the needs of women. Brennan (1982) cites Whitlam's policy speech:

> A woman's choice between making motherhood her sole career and following another career in conjunction with motherhood depends upon the availability of proper child care facilities. The Pre-Schools Commission will be responsible for developing these facilities in conjunction with preschool centres, beginning in areas where the need is most acute. (p. 14)

The ALP won the election. Within ten weeks after taking office, the party set up a Pre-Schools Committee charged with implementing a double policy: (1) by the end of a 6-year period, the opportunity should exist for all children to have a year of preschool education, and (2) child care centers should be provided to "meet the needs of children of working parents and underprivileged families" (Committee's Terms of Reference, cited by Brennan, 1982, p. 16).

At this point, there emerge most clearly two recurring problems in policies for early education. One is that resources are seldom equal to the initial promises or to the goal of "equality." If the service is intended from the start to be selective (in this case geared towards the "disadvantaged"), we face the issue firmly stated by Tizard (1976): "The term disadvantaged is used . . . with many meanings. . . . and different definitions of the term give rise to very different estimates of the proportions of families whose children are disadvantaged enough to warrant priority in nursery placement" (p. 149). Furthermore, it is difficult to claim that one definition has "more validity than others" (Tizard, 1976, p. 149). If we give priority to mothers in paid work, then "what of the young children of mothers who are psychiatrically depressed or anxious. . . . Or children of single-parent families . . .? Or children in large families? In grossly overcrowded households? In low-income families? In households where the language in the home is not English? Or handicapped children? Or children who have nowhere to play?" (Tizard, 1976, p. 150). The same issues apply if we intend a service to be eventually nonselective (e.g., by the end of 6 years, free preschool education for all children) but must start selectively.

The second problem is one of implementation, especially when the interested parties do not have the same vested interests. The party platform had been designed to meet the interests of two relatively opposed interest groups: those interested in "preschools" and those interested in "child care centers." Also interested were members of the bureaucracy, waiting to see if the responsibility for the new expansion would be placed under "health," "welfare," or "education." These several interest groups may be combined by fiat, or legislation, as proposed in the United States

in 1971. However, "legislative language and child welfare standards do not necessarily ensure such a merger will take place in the delivery of services" (Takanishi, 1977, p. 153).

Any committee would be faced with such issues. In the present case, the Pre-School Committee's task set off to a stormy start, marked by concern over the appointment of Joan Fry as chair. Joan Fry had been head of the Sydney Day Nursery School Teachers' Association. As such, she was regarded as suspect by the "kindergarten" associations (i.e., she represented "care" rather than "education"). She was also regarded as suspect by a number of women's groups, whose members considered that she was likely to relate child care centers to issues of poverty rather than to rights for women. The same groups were also concerned that the committee's six educators, one psychologist, and one professor of child health would involve a bias towards thinking in terms of children's education and children's needs, with little concern for the wider needs of women and families.

Once again, these concerns needed to be effectively expressed. Two routes provided this expression: (1) The new Prime Minister, Whitlam, had appointed not only a Pre-school Committee but also a Women's Advisor (Elizabeth Reid). In effect, there were two routes to Whitlam's ear. (2) The New South Wales Branch of the Labour Women's Organization actively lobbied for a change in policy statements at the annual ALP conference in July 1973. These statements would effectively "frame" the political content for the Fry Committee. The goal of the new policy was "to provide community support for women to participate more fully in society" (ALP Platform, p. 17). The route to such a goal was to be a set of comprehensive child care services that would be government sponsored,

established on a "priority needs basis," and community-based (i.e., responsive to varying community preferences for various forms of care and involving the local community in the establishment and running of its own services).

EVENT 4: A REPORT AND MORE REPORTS, PLUS ACTION

We shall summarize briefly here a series of events that still evokes high feeling among many of those involved and affected: The Pre-School Committee, under the direction of Joan Fry, produced a report. It was criticized by many (in some respects, its terms of reference no longer applied and, in ironic fashion, the support it gave to "preschool education" rather than "child care centers" was felt to be too strong). The report was eventually tabled and not acted upon. The committee was later disbanded, but before that reports were called for from two further groups: one from the Department of Social Welfare (not Education) and one from the Priority Review Staff, a political policy group. These two groups were relatively compatible.

The Social Welfare Commission produced a report in July 1974. In general, this report matched the 1973 restatement of party policy. Its more specific features were the following:

1. A challenge to the assumption that traditional preschool education would reduce inequality (a challenge fed by research questioning the effects of Head Start, but which also legitimated and gave a lower priority in funding to services that operated only for part of a day).
2. An argument for mixtures of services (preschool, long-day care, after-school care, occasional care, emergency care) that

should extend to the shared use of buildings (i.e., services should be "integrated").

3. An argument for choice of any mixture to be made at a community level.

4. A recognition that communities could only choose what they knew about, and a proposal of appointments to communities ("catalysts") to promote both knowledge and services.

5. An endorsement of research on services such as family day care, to determine whether its popularity among government agencies was based on its low cost rather than its effectiveness.

6. An endorsement of personnel other than people trained for preschool. The field, it was argued, could use people trained to be childcare workers rather than nursery school or preschool teachers (this third and briefer form of training was recommended by the Fry Committee and is now available in a number of Technical Colleges, modelled after the US pattern of Child Development Associates). The field could also make use of more social workers, psychiatrists, and pediatricians. (The Commission had relatively little representation from preschool organizations; the background of its chairperson was a combination of social work, administration, and sociology.)

7. A facing up to the problem of defining "need," and an attempt to define it by a Needs Rating Scale devised from a factor analysis of selected variables from the 1971 Census.

The Priority Review staff produced a report agreeing with the concepts of the Social Welfare Commission but questioning the wisdom of leaving implemention in the hands of local government. It also recommended

that the administration of the program be shifted to a special minister, responsible directly to the Prime Minister (in effect, away from the Department of Education).

These three reports were accepted and built into policy statements in 1974. The goal was to be free preschool education, subsidized childcare with parents contributing according to their means, and the encouragement of industry to establish childcare centers. The program, it was argued, would break down the distinction between "care" and "education."

The ALP won the 1974 election and established an interim committee for a children's commission. Despite the goal of widespread forms of care, the largest proportion of money went into traditional preschool centers (staff and buildings). The ALP had retained the system of response to community submissions and, to a very large extent, the percentage of money spent on preschools reflected the presence within preschool associations of available "machineries": procedures and people were already on hand to allow the swift submission of proposals and the swift spending of money.

A permanent children's commission did not eventuate. In a series of events that again still evokes high feeling and that would seem mysterious to people accustomed to other forms of government, the Labour government was formally dismissed from office in November 1975, and an election was called. The election in 1975 saw a return of the Liberal-Country Party. The new Prime Minister (Fraser) took a more conservative step and established the Office of Child Care within the Department of Social Security, under the direction of Marie Coleman. The emphasis was back to the selective provision of child care on a needs basis, to no further expansion of preschool services, and to a stress on state rather than

federal responsibility for the "regulation, licensing and provision of family and child welfare and early childhood education services" (Office of Child Care, 1979, p. 3). What also declined at this level was the strength of the push to integrate services. In a twist of fate, the push towards integration in the early childhood area has come from the Department of Education and from federal involvement in the complete funding of training colleges for teachers of young children (from 0 to 8 years, or from 2 to 8 years). Their funding (covering both staff and building costs) has meant being caught up in the general contraction of funds for all forms of teacher training and to a federal demand for the merger of institutions that once felt (many of the staff in fact still do feel) that their strongest feature was the uniqueness of the training they offered. As Takanishi (1977) suggests, the "real" history in the merging of such different professional groups, covering their "relationships with and perceptions of each other, and the conditions under which cooperation did occur . . . is still to be written" (p. 153).

DISCUSSION

We have used a history of Australian events to illustrate some ways of analyzing variations in policies for young children, and to sort out some of the factors that appear to lie behind these variations. The factors noted, we propose, are equally applicable to other countries and other times.

What we have specifically proposed is a merger of two types of factor often considered separately. One factor has been termed "ideologies." It covers the values people adopt, the categories within which they think, and the kinds of evidence or argument they find convincing. The second factor may be termed "the resources of interested parties." These

interested parties may be the people seeking change or the people who need to be persuaded. Their resources may be financial. In the history we have described, however, the important resources for people seeking change are of a different type, with one major resource being the presence of "machineries" or procedures by which one may bring acceptable evidence to the attention of people who are ready to listen and/or who wish to use it as support for a position to which they are already converted.

These two factors turn out to intersect in a number of ways and to be linked as well to economic conditions. It will accordingly be appropriate for us to end by underlining one particular point of intersection that emerged in our history and that seems in major need of clarification. This is the notion of allocating "resources according to need." (We shall set aside the question of how to separate "the needy" from "the deserving.")

Again and again in the history of early childhood education, the question arises of what "need" means to various people and of how it can be measured. It has been defined in at least two major ways, in terms of people (the "handicapped," etc.) and in terms of geographical areas (Britain's "priority areas," for example). In the one case, the individual is the client; in the other "the community" (e.g., Smith, 1979). Neither definition has been completely acceptable to all. Within Australia, for example, the Social Welfare Commission requested that two sociologists (Vinson and Homel) develop a way of designating areas as being at varying degrees of "risk" (i.e., likely to involve problems for children and families). Vinson and Homel (1976) did so, combining indicators such as the incidence of truancy, delinquency, admissions to general or psychiatric

hospitals, unemployment, protection court orders, and childcare (maintenance) orders. The report was placed in Parliament but not used.

Instead, the continuing basis for defining need has been individuals. Children who are "handicapped," "isolated," or in "one-parent families" are regarded as "in need" and as having priority in access to preschools or child care centers. Some parents in Australia have begun to challenge the assumption that to be a member of these groups automatically means that one has a problem or is in need. Nonetheless, definition by individuals seems to be politically more attractive and easier to explain than definition by area. In a situation where policy analysts (e.g., Townsend, 1979) are themselves no longer completely enthusiastic about area definitions, individuals are likely to remain the major referent. The nature of the definition and the criteria for placing one "need" above another, however, require a great deal more thinking through.

"Need" is our last example of a term that overlaps two major types of factor: one concentrating on "meanings" or "ideologies," the other concentrating on "the resources of interested parties." Our overall hope has been to demonstrate that combining attention to both types of factor helps us move towards two goals. One is the goal of making less bewildering the array of policies we may encounter firsthand in the area of early childhood education. The other is the broad goal set for us by Takanishi (1977): specifically, finding ways to write an analytic history that helps us understand both past and present.

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